No. 15

A

SERMON

Preach'd in the Pariſh Church of

St. *MICHAEL Woodſtreet.*

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF

Mrs. *HANNAH BULLIVANT.*

Who was Barbarouſly Murdered by EDMOND AUDLEY in St. *Martin's le Grand.*

By *B. Crooke*, A. M. Rector of the ſaid Pariſh

Publiſhed at the earneſt Requeſt of the Relations of the Deceas'd

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Pſalm CXIX. Verſe 137.

Righteous art thou O Lord, and juſt are thy Judgments.

'TIS the moſt exalted piece of *Humility*, to vindicate to our ſelves the *Juſtice* of God in all the *ſeverer* Methods of his *Providence*; to be throughly convinc'd that tho' the particular reaſons of his Actings, or Permiſſions, are often *paſt our finding out*, are too deep for the Fathom of humane Underſtanding, yet they are ſtill guided by an unerring Wiſdom, always agreable to its ſelf. And the conſtant

Senſe of this would fit us, for every extraordinary occurrence, and regulate our deportment under it; 'twou'd either make us *Dumb*, and *not open our Mouths, becauſe 'twas his doings*, or if we ſpoke, we ſhou'd be ſure *to juſtifie him* in our ſayings, *and clear him when he is judged.*

And therefore this good temper of Mind, this humble frame of Spirit is never more uſeful or more praiſe-worthy then at ſuch a ſeaſon as this. To behold in any perſon that calls himſelf Chriſtian, a downright thirſt after humane Blood, Fury without being provok'd, Malice without being injur'd, this is ſad and unaccountable; and to ſee Innocence fall an unexpected ſacrifice to it, ſeems at firſt ſight an amazing turn of Providence to us all, but we muſt recollect our ſelves, and if the ſurpriſe has made us too long keep ſilence, or has ſuggeſted any hard thoughts of the Almighty, it ſhou'd be pain and grief to us, and 'tis time for us to *break forth* and ſay,

Righteous art thou O Lord, and juſt are thy Judgments.

Judgments in Scripture, eſpecially in the Old Teſtament, do principally ſignifie theſe two things. Either the Commandments of God, or his dealings with Mankind, either the *Law* he gives us to walk by, or the *Method* and *Courſe* he at any time takes with us. And both of theſe are always juſt, and he is always righteous in both of them. Thus Pſ. 19. *The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the Soul, the teſtimony of the Lord is ſure and giveth Wiſdom unto the ſimple, the Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoycing the Heart, the Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.* Theſe are the Judgments of the Lord in the firſt ſenſe, the *Rule* and *Law* he preſcribs us to walk by, and *in keeping of them there is great Reward.*

The

The Lord is holy in all his ways, the paths of the Lord are Mercy and Truth, who regardeth the Works of the Lord, or the Operations of his hands? When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness; These are his Judgments in the latter Sense, his *Dealings* with Mankind, or the *Method* and *Course* that that he in his Providence takes with us, *and blessed are they that do regard them*; and this is the Sense I shall confine my self to, and take the words of the Text in, and then the Assertion will be this.

That whatsoever at any time befalls any of the Children of Men, tho' never so *surprising*, tho' never so *singularly* remarkable, yet 'tis always just in respect of God, he has his Righteous Ends in it, who can either restrain the Violence of the Ungodly, or turn the most doleful Act of it to his own Glory, who can Righteously permit the same Act of Violence to snatch the Wicked to deserv'd Punishment, and take away the Just Person from the Evils that are to come.

This is the Assertion of the Text, but drawn from the General Position, with a particular Aspect to the sad occasion that has brought us hither; This is one Prospect of the Holy Building of the Providence of God, fitted to our present Use, and I shall lead you into it by those steps, by that Method which the shortness of the Time, and the Astonishing Nature of the Thing it self, has permitted me to suggest to you. And

First, from hence it plainly appears highly Criminal and Wicked, boldly to Censure and Judge any Person, tho' under the severest Dispensation of God's Providence.

Secondly,

Secondly, That the greateſt Temporal Calamity under the Goſpel, is no ſure Sign to others, of the Anger of God, to the Perſon on whom it falls; Nay, not even that which we call ſudden Death it ſelf. And

Thirdly, That the moſt Remarkable Afflictions of Good Perſons, are if rightly conſidered, the moſt direct Proofs of the Providence of God, and the Righteouſneſs of his Dealings with Mankind; of theſe in their order, and to theſe I ſhall add a practical Concluſion of the whole.

Firſt, Then 'tis highly Criminal and Wicked, boldly to Cenſure or Judge any Perſon, tho' under the ſevereſt Diſpenſation of God's Providence.

And yet Cenſure is the common reigning Sin of the Age we live in; 'tis the Artifice of the Devil to perſuade us to abuſe our ſelves, and others, but our ſelves moſt; to waſte our Time in judging others to our great Prejudice, that we may have no time to try our own ways, or leiſure to judge our ſelves, which, if ſincerely perform'd, wou'd always highly redound to our Good and Benefit: But this Vice is never more truly odious than when it employs it ſelf in Unjuſt Thoughts, and Uncharitable Cenſures on People in Miſery, or under any great Affliction, as if every extraordinary Misfortune was a ſure ſign, that he that ſuffers it, is by the Juſtice of God expos'd to what Treatment we pleaſe, and ſet up as the deſerv'd Mark of our moſt Cruel Obſervations; but this is quite oppoſite to the Mild and Charitable Temper of the Goſpel, and ſtands moſt remarkably reprov'd by our Saviour; thus *Luke* 13, when ſome of the *Jews* related to him, the hard Fate of thoſe *Galileans*, whoſe Blood *Pilate* had mingled with their Sacrifices:

Jeſus

Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye these Galileans were Sinners above all the Galileans? I tell you nay, but except repent, ye shall all likewise perish: Or those eighteen Men upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell ye nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. He severely then reprehends this their Crime of Censuring others, and justly recalls their Thoughts to their own Breasts, to consider their own Condition, where they might soon find Arguments enough to convince them of their Uncharitable Opinions on the sudden death of those poor Men; for they themselves were much worse, were more wicked than those they so freely Censur'd, and yet were still alive, but their Uncharitableness had so encreas'd their Guilt, that without speedy Repentance, they wou'd not be long in a Condition to judge others, but wou'd more deservedly fall Examples of Divine Justice themselves; and tho' thus sharply Rebuk'd, yet so powerful, so hard to be Cur'd, or so insinuating is this Spiritual Pride, in valuing our selves, and condemning others, that the very Disciples of our Saviour were not free from it, for in the 9th of St. *John, As Jesus passed by, he saw a Man which was blind from his birth, and his Disciples ask'd him saying, did this Man sin, or his Parents, that he was born blind? but Jesus answered, neither did this Man sin nor his Parents, but that the Works of God should be made manifest in him.* How widely then do we mistake? What Unrighteous Judgment do we give, when we Impiously pry into the Secrets of God, when we Judge not according to Charity? Thus for Instance, how many different Stories, how many several Falsities of different Kinds and Shapes, drawn from Hell, and our own Malicious Tempers, have been rais'd

rais'd and ſpread abroad on this preſent ſad occaſion? How many Wounds (not much leſs Impious than that which brought her hither) has been inflicted on the Reputation of the Perſon here before us, by thoſe *who can whet their Tongue like a ſharp Sword, and ſhoot out their Arrows even bitter words*, and yet after all, the wretched Criminal that perpetrated the Horrid Fact, does freely own that he never had any Converſation with her, never to his Knowledge ſpoke one word to her, that ſhe never did him the leaſt Injury, and that he believes her not to be the Perſon he at firſt took her for, and which he did deſign at firſt to Aſſault.

This ſhou'd make us *take heed to our ways, that we offend not with our Tongues*; this ſhou'd put a Bitt and Bridle in our Mouths, teach us to leave the particular reaſons of Gods extraordinary dealings, to himſelf; and make the true uſe of them in the general Amendment of our Lives, remembring withall, *that with what Judgment we Judge, we ſhall be Judg'd, and with what Meaſure we mete, it ſhall be Meaſur'd to us again*, but 2dly,

The Second poſition is that the greateſt temporal Calamity, under the Goſpel, is no ſure ſign to others, of the Anger of God to the perſon that ſuffers it, no not even that, which we commonly call ſudden Death it ſelf: But here I ſhall divide the poſition.

And firſt in general: Afflictions and Troubles are no certain proofs of Gods Anger; for I am ſure the Apoſtle *Heb.* 12. 5, 6. reſolves them into a much better principle, and enforces our duty from it: *Deſpiſe not thou the Chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him, for whom the Lord loves he Chaſtens and ſcourges every Son whom he receives.*

Had

Had the holy *Jesus* been a temporal Prince (as the Jews not knowing the Scriptures a-right expected) had he come with Garments roll'd in the Blood of his Enemies, and not dipt in his own; had his Promises to his Followers been Temporal, relating to this World, and the Good Things thereof, then Indeed Crosses and Afflictions might have been thought Signs of God's Displeasure.

But when our Redeemer himself was made *Perfect through Sufferings*, and became an Example and Pattern to us, not only of *doing well*, but of cheerfully striving against all Temptations, and patiently submitting to all the Afflictions and Miseries that the ingratitude of Man, or Malice of Hell cou'd invent, and when he now sits triumphant in Heaven eternally rewarded for all his sufferings;

Why shou'd not we, by this Method of God towards the Captain of our Salvation, easily perceive? That he does not design to bring us to Heaven and everlasting Happiness by the Guilded and Deceitful Passage of Effeminate Pleasure and Soft Prosperity, which only weakens our Minds and fixes them to the Earth; but by the more Manly Discipline of Tryals, and Temptations, of Troubles, and Afflictions, that we may be wean'd from the empty Vanities of this World, and that our Faith and our Hope, our Patience, and all the Affections of a Moral and Christian Soul, may be daily Exercis'd in the School of Vertue, and Piety, *till we become perfect Men in Christ Jesus.*

And hence it is that *Christianity* is so often compar'd to a *Warfare* and the Life of every particular Christian re-

ſembled to a Combat, and a Conflict, manfully reſiſting all the Encounters of our Spiritual Enimies.

And repeated Exhortations are given us, to Watch, to Fight, to Strive, to Labour, to Endure, *to hold faſt the Faith* againſt all Oppoſition, to uſe our utmoſt Diligence, and to refuſe no Pains *in making our Calling and Election ſure.*

Infallible Arguments to perſuade and fully convince us, that Sloth and Eaſe and outward Pleaſures, are not the proper Lot, the deſign'd Portion of a Chriſtian, but either Afflictions and Troubles will ariſe to exerciſe his Chriſtian Courage, or elſe Watching and Faſting, Prayers and Tears are the Holy Imployments, he muſt ſometimes create to himſelf, and which his circumſtances in this World ſo loudly call for.

And indeed wou'd it not be ſtrange, and very preposterous to ſee an effeminate Army impatient of Labour, and deſirous of Eaſe, under the Conduct of ſo laborious and painful a Commander? No,

If any one will come after me, let him deny himſelf take up his Croſs and follow me, ſays our Saviour, *Mat.* 16. 14. and we have the ſame words repeated in the two next Evangeliſts: And when the young Man came to him *Mark* 10. 21. and deſir'd a practical Method to lead him to eternal Life, the concluſion of it is, *take up thy Croſs and follow me*, and *Luke* 14. 27. all that refuſe this Duty are evidently excluded the benifit of the New Covenant, *whoſoever doth not bear his Croſs, and come after me,*

cannot

cannot be my Diſciple, or as it is in another place, *is not worthy of me.*

Theſe are the Terms and Conditions of Diſcipleſhip, which the bleſſed Author of our Religion laid down at his firſt Preaching of it, and the mildeſt Interpretation of theſe places, the moſt favourable to Fleſh and Blood, that can poſſibly be given, muſt at leaſt amount to thus much,

That whoſoever wou'd be a true Diſciple of the crucified *Jeſus*, *muſt deny himſelf*, muſt by Induſtry and Diligence bring himſelf to ſuch a bleſſed compoſure of Spirit, ſo ſtay'd and fixt on heavenly things, and ſo throughly convinc'd of the Vanity, Uncertainty, and Emptineſs of all things here below, that he is willing *to take up his Croſs*, that he ſtands on the Stage of this World always prepar'd with Patience and Submiſſion, to act any Part tho' Mournful, and Tragical, which Almighty God ſees beſt, and ſafeſt for him, and fitteſt to bring him to eternal Life.

So that plain it is, Afflictions under the Goſpel are no ſure ſigns of Gods Anger, but rather the contrary; for the Goſpel tells us, *that as many as love God ſhall have trouble*; but yet *that all things ſhall work together for good to them that love him*; and that *through many Tribulations we muſt enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; it kindly then indeavours to ſet us betimes at a due diſtance from the the things of this World, that our parting from what we muſt ſoon leave, may not be too irkſome to us, but be leſſen'd by a daily expectation, and ſoften'd

by many intermediate diſappointments; all this is ſo plain, that nothing but a total ignorance of the Principles of Chriſtianity can any way contradict it.

Nor *Secondly*, (to be more particular) is what we call *ſudden Death*, a certain Mark of Gods diſpleaſure; and here let us place this in a true Light; let us, as the time will permit, take a right ſtate of the Caſe.

If Death was only a ceaſing to live, a bare privation of acting, and ſuffering, (as the wicked wou'd fain believe, but cannot) its ſpeed and ſuddeneſs might perhaps be accounted its chiefeſt excellency: For the happieſt State in this World, has thoſe troubles, which nothing but Death can eaſe, and a Life of Anguiſh is rejected even by patient *Job* himſelf, wherefore ſays he, *is Light given to him, that is in Miſery, and Life unto the bitter in Soul.?* ch. 3. 20.

But when Death is not a ceaſing to live, but a true and proper beginning to live for ever, when 'tis a paſſage to another State, eternally Happy or Miſerable; and that Happineſs and Miſery without mixture or allay, *wholy* one, or 'tother; and each of them depending on our carriage here; *Indignation* and *Wrath*, and that everlaſting, *to them that do Evil*; and *Glory and Honour*, and that eternal, *to them that continue in well doing*, as the Goſpel which has brought Immortality to light, has poſitively declar'd unto us.

This diſcovery makes the conſequences of Death ſo amazeingly important, that we cannot with any attenti-

on

on of Mind reflect on it, but we muſt fear a ſurpriſe, wiſh the approaches of it ſlow, and foreſeen, that we may have leiſure to look about us; and we muſt ſtill covet time to fit us the better for ſo great a Change.

And therefore to dye in the midſt of our Iniquities; to be haſtily cut off under habits of Diſobedience, without ſpace or opportunity for Repentance, muſt be reckon'd the foreſt of Judgments; the higheſt proof of the Divine Wrath; the finiſhing Stroke; the conſummation of Vengeance in this World; becauſe it conſigns over the obſtinate Sinner to a ſad Eternity, this indeed is the ſharpeſt ſting of Death; and from ſuch ſudden Death, *Good Lord deliver us.*

But here we muſt take notice that 'tis not properly time, or chance, or unexpected ſurpriſe, but want of preparation, that makes Death ſudden in a Chriſtian ſenſe.

We may dye ſuddenly in the moſt cronical and lingring Diſtempers (as is often ſeen in Conſumptions) if we ſtill reſolve to graſp at Life, and never think of dying; and Death may come haſtily upon us, and yet we ſhall not ſink down into Hell, if Wickedneſs is not in our Dwellings, if we have been habitually Pious, and conformable to the Law of God. We know not the time of our Maſters coming, therefore we muſt watch, and if we do watch, whenever he comes, he will ſay, *well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

And

And bleſſed be God this diſtinction fully reaches the Caſe in hand. Death came ſuddenly on our deceaſed Friend, but they that were her Friends, and converſt with her have abundant reaſon to believe ſhe was not unprepar'd for its comming.

She look'd not for it at that particular time and place, but ſhe was provided, let it come when, or where it wou'd.

It came upon her like an Armed Man, but ſhe had the weapons of her Chriſtian Warfare about her, and I doubt not, is now *more then Conqueror, through him that loves her.*

And let me not be blam'd for ſaying thus much, an extraordinary Occaſion, an injur'd Reputation, and a malicious World extort it from me; and why ſhou'd we be only *free* to *cenſure,* and not have *liberty* to *vindicate* a Chriſtian, when there is ſo much room for it? And I ſpeak with the more aſſurance, becauſe I look upon my ſelf to be ſomething of a competent witneſs in this Cauſe, and the Evidence I have to offer is this. Some few Years ago ſhe was taken with the common Viſitation of all Men, lay'd on a Bed of Sickneſs, and very near the ſhadow of Death: And I then perform'd the duty of my Function to her.

And as near as I can remember, the Purport of her Diſcourſe was this, that ſhe thank'd God ſhe had not her Repentance to begin, that through his Grace ſhe had taken care of her Soul in the time of her Health, and hop'd

hop'd ſhe had made her Peace with Heaven; and therefore what ſhe chiefly requir'd, was our Prayers, that in the midſt of her Pains, ſhe might poſſeſs her Soul in Patience, and intirely ſubmit her ſelf to the Will of God.

And then and there I ſaw ſo many Papers of her own Writing, on different Subjects, but wholly relating to the Pious Conduct and Management of her ſelf, that not this deceitful World, but thoſe *Bleſſed Manſions above*, which ſhe is gone to, was certainly her greateſt Care and Concern: And ever ſince that (as ſometime before) ſhe has been a conſtant, and I think, a more than Monthly Communicant at this Church; and this very Day, and at this Place, ſhe deſign'd to meet her Lord at his Holy Inſtitution, but he has order'd it otherwiſe, and I doubt not, but ſhe is now with the Inſtitutor himſelf, *Jeſus the Mediator of the New Covenant.*

And 'tis very obſervable, that by an happy Preſage, a bleſſed Impulſe, her Preparation was more ſolemn, her Retirement more early and ſtrick, than uſual, tho' the ſerioufneſs and ſtrickneſs of her Preparation was always remarkable:

And therefore if they that are fit to Communicate, are fit to die; if to die daily, to mortifie the Deeds of the Fleſh, to remember that the Grace of God teaches us to live Righteouſly, Soberly, and Godly in this preſent World:

If theſe are good Tokens of being prepar'd for Death, as God be thanked they are, there is then this Conſolation under ſuch doleful Circumſtances, that we have juſt Reaſon to believe, that her Death was only a quick Paſſage to everlaſting Life; and that the Act of Violence which was ſo fatal to her Body, cou'd not wound her Better Part, cou'd not hurt her Immortal Soul. But Thirdly,

The Third and laſt Aſſertion is, That the moſt remarkable Afflictions of good Perſons are, if rightly conſider'd, the moſt direct Proofs of the Providence of God, and the Righteouſneſs of his Dealings with Mankind; for they clearly dictate this great and important Truth to us, that after this Life there ſhall be a day of Judgment, where God will demonſtrate to the whole World, *that he is Righteous, and that his Judgments are juſt*, and then ſhall the Righteous be for ever ſafe, and the Son of Violence ſhall not approach to hurt them; but to make this Poſition clear to you.

The Principles of Natural Religion muſt inform every one, that Juſtice is an Eſſential Attribute of the Godhead, never to be ſeparated from it; ſo that God can never ceaſe to be Juſt, or not do Right. Now we are ſure that one of the chief Branches of Juſtice, is Impartially to diſtribute Good, or Evil, Rewards, or Puniſhment, ſuitable to the Actions and Deſerts of every Perſon it is concern'd with: And accordingly God being the great Diſpencer of Juſtice throughout the World, has declar'd that his Ways and Dealings are equal, and therefore tho' he is Gracious, and Merciful, yet he can by

by no means clear the Guilty, but whoſoever perſiſts in wickedneſs muſt be miſerable, but that the Righteous ſhall be ſurely bleſs'd, and proſper; *for ſhall not the Judge of the whole Earth do Right, and reward every Man according to his Works?*

But now tho' he (who is Truth it ſelf) has ſo often and ſolemnly aſſerted this to be his conſtant Method, and Manner of Acting, and Juſtice we ſee requires that it ſhou'd be ſo; yet if we look into the daily Diſpenſations of his Providence, in reſpect of this World, we ſhall find it quite otherwiſe; here as the Wiſe Man obſerves, all things ſeem to come alike to all, there is often times one and the ſame Event to the Righteous, and to the Wicked; to the Clean, and to the Unclean; to him that Sacrificeth, and to him that Sacrificeth not:

He ſeems to give out his *Temporal Bleſſings* with an undiſtinguiſhing Hand, he makes his Sun to riſe on the Evil as well as on the Good, and ſends his Rain equally on the Juſt, and on the Unjuſt; or if there be any difference for the better, the Wicked very often have it; as *David* pathetically ſhews in the 73d *Pſalm*, where employing his Thoughts on this very Subject, he was almoſt born down, and ruin'd by the force of the Temptation, but recovering himſelf by Meditation, and Prayer, he Religiouſly, and warmly breaks forth; *Truly God is loving unto Iſrael; even unto ſuch as are of a clean heart; nevertheleſs my feet were almoſt gone, my treadings had well-nigh ſlipt: And why? I was griev'd at the wicked, I ſee the ungodly in ſuch proſperity.* And the ſame Expoſtulation we find utter'd by Righteous *Job* in the midſt of his Af-

flictions, and accounted the moſt aggravating Circumſtance of them; thus Chap. 21, reflecting on his former Care and Diligence in the ways of Piety, and comparing it with his preſent Miſery, and the outward happineſs of thoſe that never were Pious: This laſt thought makes him ſeem to reſent the ill uſage, and almoſt in the anguiſh of his Soul, to accuſe the Juſtice of God; when he crys out, *Mark, and be aſtoniſh'd, wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea are mighty in power? Their Houſes are ſafe from fear, neither is the Rod of God upon them; they take the Timbrel, and the Harp, and ſpend their days in mirth:* And yet both theſe good Men were ſoon convinc'd of their Error, and 'tis worth our while to examine what it was that convinc'd them.

David went into the Sanctuary of God, and there he underſtood his miſtake, and found that the different Method of God's Dealing with the Righteous, and the Wicked, was not ſo viſible in Temporal, as in Spiritual Bleſſings, that he wou'd be to the Righteous the ſtrength of their Heart, and their Portion for ever. That he wou'd guide them with his Counſels, and afterwards receive them into Glory: And then he breaks out, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth that I deſire in compariſon of thee?*

And *Job* in the height of his Miſery comforts himſelf with this aſſurance; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon Earth; and and tho' after my Skin, Worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for my ſelf, and*

and mine Eyes ſhall behold, and not another, tho' my reins are conſumed within me.

The meaning of which excellent Sentence, and the force of this Argument drawn from the Afflictions of Good Perſons is the ſame, and tends directly to this one thing, which is, that this World is not ſtrictly, in reſpect of God, a place of Rewards, or Puniſhments; or a time for exact and viſible meting out to every one according to their deſerts, for then evil cou'd never happen to good Men, or good things to evil Men; but the Righteous muſt always proſper, and the wicked be always miſerable; the contrary to which is every day manifeſted; which plainly ſhews that this Life is only a ſhort time of Tryal, and Probation, to prepare and fit us for another more durable State; 'tis a place of Action, and Chriſtian Warfare to Exerciſe thoſe Vertues, God has indu'd us with; moſt of which having different Objects, ſome being deſign'd to guide us ſafe through the dangerous Temptations of Proſperity, others to ſuſtain us under the hard preſſure of Adverſity; ſome being converſant about Heaven, others relating to this Earth; ſome reſpecting our Neighbours, and ſome our ſelves: 'Tis impoſſible that the Man of God ſhou'd be exercis'd in every good Work, if his Circumſtances were always the ſame; and therefore God deals not unjuſtly, but mercifully with him, in giving him frequent opportunities of practiſing thoſe Vertues here, which he intends everlaſtingly to reward hereafter: Nor has the Wicked any Reaſon to boaſt of their ſhort-liv'd Proſperity, which in a moment may be ſnatched from them, and ſwallowed up in a State of endleſs Miſery.

Seeing then that Almighty God is moſt eſſentially Juſt, and cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe; and ſeeing further that this Juſtice makes no certain difference in this World between the Righteous and the Wicked, by Puniſhing the Sins of the one, and Rewarding the Vertues of the other; it evidently follows, that after this Life there muſt be a Day of Judgment, a juſt Tribunal ſhall be erected, before which all muſt appear, and impartial Juſtice be done upon all: And then all the various Methods, the extraordinary Operations of God's Providence (which are now the Secrets of the Almighty, and above our narrow Apprehenſions) ſhall be ſo fully explain'd and laid open to us, that we ſhall ſee clearly into all the Reaſons of them, and in them all admire the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God to the Righteous; and with confuſion of Face own our Uncharitable Miſtakes, when we find what we thought a ſtroke of Rigor, to be the true Effect of Mercy: And then ſhall the Righteous ſtand boldly before the Face of them that have deſtroyed him, and they ſhall wonder at the greatneſs of his Salvation.

And this ſhall bring me to the laſt thing propos'd, the Practical Application of the whole.

And here I am almoſt perſuaded you expect I ſhou'd once more caution you againſt the unkind, and cruel Sin of Judging; againſt a bold interpoſing your own Unchriſtian Sentiments in the Dealings of the Almighty.

The Special Motives of his Judgments *are far above us, and out of our ſight; the Knowledge of them is too excellent*

excellent for us, and we cannot attain unto it: Let us then with Fear, and Humility, baniſh all curious and unfruitful Diſquiſititions; let us leave the cauſe of Permiſſion, to God, that permitted it; and to the other World, where it will be diſclos'd to us, according to the Apoſtles Advice, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. *To judge nothing before the time, till the Lord comes, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and make manifeſt the Counſels of the heart.*

But here you will be apt to think, what muſt nothing be ſaid of ſuch a ſurpriſing Act of Providence, muſt no uſe be made of it? Yes ſurely, much every way; let every one ſpeak of the Judgments of the Lord, *and by them learn Rigteouſneſs*; and to that end let their Diſcourſe be ſuch as becometh Chriſtians.

If we ſee any one afflicted, let us ſay to our ſelves, great are the Troubles of the Righteous, but the Lord will bring him out of all: If we have a mind to Diſcourſe of this preſent ſad occaſion, let us ſay to one another,

Behold God has ſuddenly taken away one more Righteous than our ſelves: He has taken her, we hope, becauſe ſhe was fit for him; and he leaves us ſtill upon Earth, that we may be fit too; that ſuch a warning may effectually work upon us, and haſten our Repentance; and miſerable are we if we lay not hold on ſuch a warning.

If we believe the Principles of Chriſtianity, we muſt be extremely ſenſible how ſad a thing it wou'd be for any of

of us to be call'd out of this World unprepar'd for another, and hurry'd before the Righteous Tribunal with all our Sins about us; this we know well enough, but the miſchief is, this Knowledge is only General and Superficial, and we never give it leave to make a laſting Impreſſion on us, but ſurely ſuch an Admonition as this ſhou'd without leave, *force* an admittance, and for ever fix it on our Minds:

Let every one of us then endeavour to make a true uſe of this deplorable Inſtance of the uncertainty of our abode in this World, and like her be always in ſome meaſure prepar'd to leave it.

And let us remember, that if upon any account we defer our Repentance, we act ſo imprudently, that our Eternal Wellfare lies at ſtake every moment, at the mercy of every Accident, Judgment, or Diſeaſe; and we give that which otherwiſe cou'd only kill the Body, a power of deſtroying the very Soul too.

And truly nothing has been more injurious to Mankind, than to ſuffer themſelves to be deluded in thoſe things, which one wou'd think cannot ſo much as admit of a Deluſion.

Thus every one knows the certainty of Death, and the uncertainty of the Time when, and the Manner how; this needs no proof, no Man can be ignorant of it:

And no Chriſtian but muſt allow, *That as it is appointed for all Men once to die, ſo after Death comes Judgment, where every one muſt receive according to what*

Judgment,

they have done in this Life, whether it be good, or whether it bad.

And yet what Proviſion is made for all theſe known Truths? None at all: We live as if we were ſure of living as long as we pleaſe, tho' we are indeed ſure of the contrary, and we never think of Judgment till we are Summon'd to it.

But whatſoever we have been in time paſt, let us in ſo great concerns, be more cautious for the future; let us in God's Name make a right and wiſe diſtinction of things, and ſince die we muſt, and we know not when, or how: let this great Example of ſudden Death have its due effect, and make us all reſolve never to live in ſuch a State which we ſhall fear to die in.

FINIS.

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